



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

Office of Communications • Mark Dallas Loeffler, Director
1700 N. Congress Ave. • Austin, TX 78701-1495 • 512-463-5339 • FAX: 512-475-1415

PRESS RELEASE

Rio Grande State Veterans Cemetery to double columbaria capacity

\$500,000 grant makes room to serve more veterans, their families

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Andy Hogue
1(512)463-9212
andy.hogue@glo.texas.gov

MISSION, Texas — A \$464,101 grant to the Texas Veterans Land Board couldn't have come any sooner.

The funding will be used to build two new columbaria (small buildings where ashes and remains are kept, including urns) at the Rio Grande Valley State Veterans Cemetery in Mission, in addition to landscape improvements.

Out of around 500 niches in the three existing columbaria structures, only about 100 remain empty. The two new columbaria will expand capacity by 700 new niches – more than doubling the number of non-burial resting places at the cemetery. The estimated six-month project will begin this month.

"Keeping up with demand for these places of rest is a high priority for us," said Eric Brown, Director of State Veterans Cemeteries for the Texas Veterans Land Board. "By adding more capacity to the cemetery, we give more Texans an opportunity to honor the memory of some of our greatest heroes."

Brown said the grant, from the Department of Veterans Affairs, was given to the Texas VLB because of the success of the cemetery in serving our veterans.

There is no charge for the burial of Texas veterans at the Rio Grande Valley State Veterans Cemetery. Family members of veterans are also eligible for burial at the cemetery, located on 75 acres southwest of downtown Mission.

Built in 2006, the cemetery currently provides room for 6,000 gravesites. The long range plan provides for more than 25,000 places of rest for veterans and family members.

WHO: Texas VLB, the VA, and staff of the Rio Grande Valley State Veterans Cemetery

WHAT: \$464,101 cemetery expansion project

WHEN: February through July 2014 (estimated time)

WHERE: Rio Grande Valley State Veterans Cemetery, 2520 S. Inspiration Road, Mission

WHY: To make sure resting places for Texas' heroes are available for generations to come

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